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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1119
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY 0709
RUEHXS/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS HANOI 000596

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: PARTY'S 14TH PLENUM TO OPEN SOON; LEADERSHIP
POSITIONS STILL UNCLEAR

Ref: Hanoi 222 and previous

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Communist Party's Central Committee will begin its 14th plenum March 18. What most likely will be the final gathering before the (still unscheduled) 10th Party Congress, this plenum will seek to address public commentary on the Party's draft Political Report and finalize senior personnel decisions. It remains unclear who will assume what position, although the majority of observers give the nod to Standing DPM Nguyen Tan Dung to become Prime Minister. End Summary.

14th Plenum To Open March 18

¶2. (SBU) Putting an end to speculation, the Communist Party of Vietnam's (CPV) Central Committee will meet on March 18 for its 14th plenum prior to the Party's 10th Congress. According to Ngo Cuong, an aide to Central Committee member and Supreme People's Court Presiding Judge Nguyen Van Hien, the plenum will run for a week and will seek to address public commentary on the draft Political Report (septel) and nail down senior personnel decisions. In case the Central Committee is unable to do this, there is precedent for recessing the plenum and scheduling its continuation immediately prior to the (still unscheduled) Party Congress.

Leadership Positions Remain Up In The Air

¶3. (SBU) Following January's 13th Plenum, some pundits were predicting the final Central Committee meeting would be held in mid-February (reftel). However, National Assembly Chairman and Politburo member Nguyen Van An's extended trip to South America impacted the plenum's scheduling (he will return to Hanoi shortly). Furthermore, the word on the street is that the Party has had a difficult time reaching consensus on senior leadership positions, including the CPV General Secretary and State President. In one plausible scenario, Standing Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung will assume the position of Prime Minister and Hanoi City Party Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong will take over as Chairman of the National Assembly. More shaky predictions and rumors involve who will take over as Party chief and President. HCMC Party Secretary Nguyen Minh Triet is mentioned as a possible candidate for either job, and current Party General Secretary Nong Duc Manh may stay in place or assume the

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presidency. Or, it could be none of the above.

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